

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-28. (Canceled)

29. (New) A content management apparatus operable to manage a number of content duplications performed on a plurality of apparatuses connected to a network, comprising:

a holding unit operable to respectively hold an in-group remaining number and an out-group remaining number, the in-group remaining number indicating a number of permitted content duplications performed on an apparatus belonging to a predetermined group, and the out-group remaining number indicating a number of permitted duplications performed on an apparatus not belonging to the predetermined group;

a group judging unit operable to judge whether at least one apparatus of the plurality of apparatuses belongs to the predetermined group; and

a management unit operable to manage the number of content duplications performed on the at least one apparatus based on the in-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit, and manage the number of content duplications performed on the at least one apparatus based on the out-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged not to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit.

30. (New) The content management apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:

an acquisition unit operable to acquire a duplication request from the at least one apparatus,

wherein said group judging unit is operable to judge whether the at least one apparatus which has made the duplication request belongs to the predetermined group, and said management unit is operable to accept the duplication request and subtract "1" from the in-group remaining number if the in-group remaining number is not "0" and reject the duplication request if the in-group remaining number is "0" when the at least one apparatus is judged to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit, and accept the

duplication request and subtract “1” from the out-group remaining number if the out-group remaining number is not “0” and reject the duplication request if the out-group remaining number is “0” when the at least one apparatus is judged not to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit.

31. **(New)** The content management apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:

an acquisition unit operable to acquire a deletion request from the at least one apparatus,

wherein said group judging unit is operable to judge whether the at least one apparatus which made the deletion request belongs to the predetermined group, and said management unit is operable to accept the deletion request and add “1” to the in-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit, and accept the deletion request and add “1” to the out-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged not to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit.

32. **(New)** The content management apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:

an acquisition unit operable to acquire a start time of a duplication or a deletion of content; and

a time management unit operable to output an operation instruction to said management unit at the start time,

wherein said management unit, upon receipt of the operation instruction, is operable to manage the number of content duplications performed on the at least one apparatus based on the in-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit, and manage the number of content duplications performed on the at least one apparatus based on the out-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged not to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit.

33. **(New)** The content management apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:

an acquisition unit operable to acquire a usage expiration date of the content; and
a time management unit operable to output an operation instruction to said management unit when the usage expiration date has passed,

wherein said management unit, upon receipt of the operation instruction, is operable to add “1” to the in-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit, and add “1” to the out-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged not to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit.

34. **(New)** The content management apparatus of claim 29, wherein

said management unit is operable to notify, to the apparatus, transfer information showing a number that is less than or equal to the in-group remaining number, and a number that is less than or equal to the out-group remaining number, and subtract the numbers shown by the transfer information from the in-group remaining number and the out-group remaining number.

35. **(New)** The content management apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:

an acquisition unit operable to acquire duplication-generation information relating to the content,

wherein said management unit is operable to manage the number of content duplications based on the in-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit, and manage the number of content duplications based on the out-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged not to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit.

36. **(New)** The content-duplication management apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:

an acquisition unit operable to acquire request-apparatus information unique to the at least one apparatus and a revocation list showing one or more apparatuses to which content

duplication is not permitted,

wherein said management unit is operable to manage the number of content duplications based on the request-apparatus information, the revocation list, the duplication-generation information and the in-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit, and manage the number of content duplications based on the request-apparatus information, the revocation list, the duplication-generation information and the out-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged not to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit.

37. (New) The content management apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:

an acquisition unit operable to acquire request-area information showing an area relating to the at least one apparatus,

wherein said management unit is operable to manage the number of content duplications based on the request-area information and the in-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit, and manage the number of content duplications based on the request-area information and the out-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged not to belong to the predetermined group by the group judging unit.

38. (New) The content management apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:

an authentication unit operable to share a session key with the at least one apparatus by conducting authentication processing with the at least one apparatus; and

an encryption/decryption unit operable, if authentication is successful, to encrypt and decrypt communication with the at least one apparatus using the session key.

39. (New) The content management apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:

an acquisition unit operable to acquire a duplication request and a deletion request; and

a request accumulation unit operable to manage one of the duplication request and the deletion request using a request-arrival sequence queue, and to have said management unit execute a deletion request that is subsequent in the queue to a duplication request, prior to the duplication request.

40. **(New)** The content management apparatus of claim 29, further comprising:

an acquisition unit,

wherein the network is a home network connected to an external network, said acquisition unit is operable to acquire the content from outside the home network, and said group judging unit is operable to judge the at least one apparatus connected to the home network as belonging to the predetermined group.

41. **(New)** A content management method for managing a number of content duplications performed on a plurality of apparatuses connected to a network, comprising:

respectively holding an in-group remaining number and an out-group remaining number, the in-group remaining number indicating a number of permitted content duplications performed on an apparatus belonging to a predetermined group, and the out-group remaining number indicating a number of permitted duplications performed on an apparatus not belonging to the predetermined group;

judging whether at least one apparatus of the plurality of apparatuses belongs to the predetermined group; and

managing a number of content duplications performed on the at least one apparatus based on the in-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged to belong to the predetermined group, and managing the number of content duplications performed on the at least one apparatus based on the out-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged not to belong to the predetermined group.

42. **(New)** A computer program encoded on a computer-readable medium that causes a content management apparatus to perform a method for managing a number of content

duplications performed on a plurality of apparatuses connected to a network, comprising:

respectively holding an in-group remaining number and an out-group remaining number, the in-group remaining number indicating a number of permitted content duplications performed on an apparatus belonging to a predetermined group, and the out-group remaining number indicating a number of permitted duplications performed on an apparatus not belonging to the predetermined group;

judging whether at least one apparatus of the plurality of apparatuses belongs to a predetermined group; and

managing a number of content duplications performed on the at least one apparatus based on the in-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged to belong to the predetermined group, and managing the number of content duplications performed on the at least one apparatus based on the out-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged not to belong to the predetermined group.

43. (New) A content management system comprising an apparatus and a content management apparatus that is connected to the apparatus via a network and manages a number of content duplications performed on a plurality of apparatuses, said content management apparatus comprising:

a holding unit operable to respectively hold an in-group remaining number and an out-group remaining number, the in-group remaining number indicating a number of permitted content duplications performed on an apparatus belonging to a predetermined group, and the out-group remaining number indicating a number of permitted duplications performed on an apparatus not belonging to the predetermined group;

a group judging unit operable to judge whether at least one apparatus of the plurality of apparatuses belongs to the predetermined group; and

a management unit operable to manage the number of content duplications performed on the at least one apparatus based on the in-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit, and

manage the number of content duplications performed on the apparatus based on the out-group remaining number when the at least one apparatus is judged not to belong to the predetermined group by said group judging unit.

44. **(New)** The content management system of claim 43, wherein

said content management apparatus is operable to request an accounting system to manage accounting.